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How Central Is Our Intelligence?

The Invisible Government, by David Wise and Thomas B. Ross (Random House, 375 pp. \$5.95), explores the dark corners of the American secret intelligence apparatus. Harry Howe Ransom, Vanderbilt University political scientist, has written on the same subject in his books "Central Intelligence and National Security" and "Can American Democracy Survive Cold War?"

By HARRY HOWE RANSOM

SIX WEEKS before his death President Kennedy denied flatly that the Central Intelligence Agency was operating independently in secret maneuvers overseas. Referring to Viet Nam, he asserted that CIA was under "close control" and was functioning "under my instructions." The President, who as a Senator had voted unsuccessfully in 1956 to establish a Joint Congressional Committee on Intelligence, also said he was "well satisfied" with existing controls over CIA.

Shortly before he died, however, Kennedy called for the creation of a Presidential task force to survey America's world-wide intelligence activities, hoping to effectuate greater coordination and efficiency. It remained for Lyndon B. Johnson, who had voted against the Joint Congressional Committee in 1956, to constitute this special task force and receive its report. Neither Congress nor the public is likely to learn details of its findings or of actions taken to remedy deficiencies. Doubts remain about the adequacy of responsible control. Similar doubts prompted the writing of this book.

America today has two central governments, according to Washington journalists David Wise and Thomas Ross. The visible one is presided over by the President and Congress and operates generally in public view. The other is the "Invisible Government." Its "heart" is the Central Intelligence Agency. Its head is the director of Central Intelligence, currently John A. McCone.

This invisible government "... conducts espionage, and plans and executes secret operations all over the globe." It allegedly hides behind and secretly sponsors a number of commercial and educational enterprises. It occupies "restricted" floors in American embassy buildings abroad and hives soldiers of fortune for para-military adventures. All of this reportedly takes place beyond the effective control of the President and Congress and outside the public's view. Wise and Ross assert as a "fact" that "The Invisible Government has achieved a quasi-independent status and power of its own." Secretly it "is shaping the lives of 190,000,000 Americans." Furthermore, it has been spectacularly unsuccessful in many of its covert foreign maneuvers.

An "intelligence community" grown with Cold War to enormous size may accurately be characterized as a partially invisible subgovernment of substantial influence. It is simplistic, however, to label it as the single "other" government. Rather it is but one of a number of loci of power in the nation's mammoth national security bureaucracy. The intelligence system, in fact, is itself fractured into several major autonomous and competing units. Indeed, this book probably could not have been written were there not several "in-

visible" sources of power, such as a State Department, Pentagon, and an FBI, competing with each other and with CIA and thus willing to tell tales out of school.

The book's picture of invisibility is also overdrawn. Does the public really know "virtually nothing" about the intelligence establishment, as the authors claim? Surely a substantial number know something about Gary Powers's U-2 flight in May 1960; these same authors published an excellent book about it in 1962. And more than a few know about CIA's role in the Bay of Pigs and about various of its other foreign intrigues. Some undoubtedly have read one or more of the half-dozen major books published on the subject in recent years. One, for example, was by Allen W. Dulles, the not precisely anonymous former head of the "Invisible Government."

Having said this about the book's simplistic conception of power in Washington and its overstated thesis, one hastens to add that much of this volume's substance represents competent, resourceful reporting. Although claiming too much for the book's originality, Wise and Ross have pulled aside the curtain of secrecy further than ever before. They reveal a substantial amount of new information. There are fresh facts and interpretations of the Bay of Pigs and Cuban missile crises. Also described in penetrating detail are other CIA-sponsored adventures and misadventures in Burma, Indonesia,

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